

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Mary Fisher, mother of Deputy Kevin Michael Sherwood.

On October 9, 2003, our family changed forever. Our son, brother, father, husband, and best friend was killed in the line of duty in Clare County as an impaired driver driving the wrong way on 127 with his lights out hit Kevin head on. Kevin's car burst into flames, and by the grace of God, he died almost instantly. The other driver died as well. A little after 1am, the deputies arrived to tell Kevin's wife Katy that she was now a widow. As they spoke, 4 year old Gabrielle woke up and asked her mom what was going on. 9 year old Meagan and 1 year old Gwendolyn did not learn of their daddy's death until morning.

As a parent, my grief was unbearable, but Kevin's wife, Katy was left with the unimaginable task of telling her daughters their father was never coming home, and facing the rest of her life without her best friend, confidante, and husband, and assuming the role of mother and father to her 3 young girls. I cannot imagine her grief.

Not only was Katy left without her husband and provider, but at 8am the morning of Kevin's death, she learned she had been stripped of their health benefits. I will never forget the reasoning behind this move. Their contract stated that if any deputy leaves the department, their health care benefits would not continue. Yes, I guess Kevin did leave the department.

This is not the only case of survivors losing health benefits with the line of duty death of their officers. It happens time and again in the State of Michigan alone.

I beg you, please pass this bill. No survivor should have to have to face losing their benefits in addition to losing their spouse. Try to envision yourself in their shoes. Passing this bill will not lessen the impact, grief and tragedy of a line of duty death. However, it will be at least one less thing the spouse and family will have to endure on their dreadful journey.